

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 ACDA-12 HA-05 /096 W
-----061495 101706Z /43

R 101632Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7353
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 03228

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, GE, GW
SUBJECT: GDR OBSERVES ANNIVERSARY OF DEFEAT OF GERMANY

REFS: (A) BERLIN 2753; (B) BERLIN 3085;
(C) BERLIN 3205

1. ON MAY 8 THE GDR OBSERVED THE THIRTY THIRD
ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEFEAT OF NAZI GERMANY WITH A
WREATH LAYING CEREMONY AT THE SOVIET WAR MEMORIAL
IN TREPTOW AND A SPEECH AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCE
AT THE STAATSOPER IN THE EVENING. THESE EVENTS
WERE ATTENDED BY MOST MEMBERS OF THE POLITBURO
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(SINDERMANN, HOWEVER, WAS ABSENT), THE GDR COUNCIL
OF STATE AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND HIGH RANKING
SOVIET AND VOLKSARMEE OFFICERS. THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS
ALSO ATTENDED. IN THE CASE OF THE US, FRANCE, THE
UK AND THE FRG THE AMBASSADORS WERE REPRESENTED BY
THEIR DEPUTIES OR LOWER RANKING OFFICERS.

2. THE MAIN NON-CEREMONIAL FEATURE OF THE OBSERVATION WAS A LONG SPEECH DELIVERED ON THE EVENING OF MAY 8 BY GENERAL HEINZ KESSLER, DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE, CHIEF OF THE MAIN STAFF AND MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THE SPEECH, PUBLISHED IN FULL IN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND AND OTHER EAST BERLIN DAILIES, CONSISTED IN EQUAL PARTS OF SELF-CONGRATULATION, EFFUSIVE PRAISE FOR THE SOVIET UNION AND CRITICISM OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. MUCH OF THE FIRST SECTION WAS DEVOTED TO EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE TO THE USSR FOR THE DEFEAT OF FASCISM. THERE WAS ONE, BRIEF PASSING REFERENCE TO UNNAMED OTHER ARMIES IN THE ANTI-HITLER COALITION. THE SOVIET UNION WAS GIVEN CREDIT FOR BRINGING END TO THE COLONIAL ERA, FOR DETENTE, ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND FOR HUMAN PROGRESS IN GENERAL.

3. THE MOST STRIKING ASPECT OF KESSLER'S SPEECH WAS A LENGTHY CRITICISM OF CERTAIN FEATURES OF WEST GERMAN SOCIETY. ALTHOUGH NOT AIMED AT THE BONN GOVERNMENT, KESSLER FOUND ALMOST NOTHING GOOD TO SAY ABOUT WEST GERMANY AND THE NET EFFECT WAS A HARSH CRITIQUE.

4. KESSLER STATED THAT IT WAS NO SURPRISE THAT "INFLUENTIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF GERMAN IMPERIALISM" CONFIDENTIAL

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BELONG TO THE MOST REACTIONARY AND EXPANSIONIST WING OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONOPOLY BOURGEOISIE AND THAT THEY ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH ALL ANTI-COMMUNIST FORCES - CHILEAN FASCISM, ISRAELI EXPANSIONISM AND SOUTH AFRICAN RACISM. THIS POSITION WAS IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN UNHEALTHY TRADITION IN THE HISTORY OF GERMANY. KESSLER STATED THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE GDR WERE CONCERNED THAT THE DESTROYERS OF THE GERMAN NATION, WHICH WITHIN HALF A GENERATION BROUGHT ABOUT THE DISASTER OF TWO WORLD WAR,S WERE ONCE AGAIN DELUDING A LARGE PART OF THE PEOPLE OF THE FRG WITH HATRED TOWARD COMMUNISM, THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR AND USING THEM AS INSTRUMENTS OF A SUICIDAL POLICY. KESSLER CHARGED THAT MANY COMMUNISTS AND ANTI-FASCISTS IN THE FRG WERE BEING PERSECUTED. WHILE ON THE ONE HAND, KESSLER WENT ON, PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS TAKE PLACE AND THE CHANCELLOR AND FOREIGN MINISTER AND THEIR DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES GIVE SPEECHES ABOUT NORMALIZING RELATIONS, IN PRACTICE, JUST THE OPPOSITE PROCESS IS TAKING PLACE. KESSLER DESCRIBED THE REVANCHIST, MILITARIST AND NEO-FASCIST GROUPS WHO, HE SAID, PREACH NATIONALIST AND RACIST HATRED,

GLORIFY HITLER'S POLICY OF FORCE AND PREDICT OPENLY
THE RESTORATION OF THE GERMAN REICH WITHIN THE
1937 BORDERS.

5. SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASSIMOV HOSTED A LARGE
RECEPTION AFTER THE STAATSOPER EVENT. THE
RECEPTION WAS ATTENDED BY TOP-RANKING GDR OFFICIALS
INCLUDING HONECKER. DURING THE RECEPTION, ABRASSIMOV
MADE A POINT OF SEEKING THE AMBASSADOR OUT FOR A
TOAST AND HONECKER ALSO GREETED THE AMBASSADOR.

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6. COMMENT: THE PRAISE FOR THE SOVIET UNION AND
THE EXPRESSION OF UNBREAKABLE SOLIDARITY, CONSIDERING
THE OCCASION, WERE NOT SURPRISING. THE TREATMENT OF
THE FRG, PARTICULARLY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE
BREZHNEV VISIT, WAS STRIKING AND IS IN CONTRAST
WITH THE RELATIVELY MODERATE REFERENCES WHICH GDR
SPOKESMEN HAVE MADE TO THE FRG IN RECENT MONTHS.
ALTHOUGH THE CRITICISMS DIRECTED AT THE FRG ARE NOT

NEW, THE TONE WAS HARsher AND THE CATALOGUE OF
WEST GERMAN "OFFENSES" LONGER THAN WE HAVE HEARD
RECENTLY. WHEN CRITICISMS OF THE FRG HAVE BEEN
MADE BY EAST GERMAN OFFICIALS, THIS HAS USUALLY
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BEEN ACCOMPANIED, AT LEAST IN RECENT MONTHS, WITH
AN EXPRESSION OF WILLINGNESS BY THE GDR TO NORMALIZE
RELATIONS. THIS WAS CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT FROM KESSLER'S
SPEECH, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT ATTACH TOO MUCH
SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS OMISSION AT THIS POINT. HOWEVER,
THE SPEECH IS CONSISTENT WITH THE TONE OF THE
EDITORIAL COMMENT ON BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO BONN,
REPORTED REFTEL C, AND WAS PROBABLY INTENDED MAINLY
FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION.

7. WE ALSO NOTE THAT THIS IS THE FIRST
OCCASION IN SOME TIME THAT WE CAN RECALL A MILITARY
FIGURE MAKING A MAJOR POLITICAL SPEECH. IN THE
PAST THE MAY 8 ADDRESS HAS BEEN GIVEN BY HONECKER,
STOPH, SINDERMAN AND LAMBERZ. END COMMENT. BOLEN

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